The PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

DECEMBER 1943

The Magnificat
By CHARLES H. HEIMSATH

The Prophetic Day
By JOSEPH FORT NEWTON

The Disturbing Jesus
By HOWARD J. CONN

The Practicality of Jesus
By FRED E. LUCHS

The One New Thing in Christianity
By A. T. DeGROOT

After Christmas, What?
By ROGER EDDY TREAT

Christmas Choral Service
By JOHN HILTNER

Trimming the Tree
SERMON FOR CHILDREN
By CARL S. WEIST

Sermon Illustrations

Contributed by Readers of THE PULPIT

The Signs Are Going Up Again

Each week *Life* magazine prints the "picture of the week." In a recent issue the selection was one of a young lady replacing road signs in England. In the nightmare after Dunkirk, the British, fearing nazi parachutists, removed every road sign which might furnish direction for the unwelcome arrivals. Ever since, strangers and even local residents have had a difficult time finding a particular street or town. Sense of direction had to be relied upon. But now England is putting back its road signs!

This is more than merely an encouraging act in our day. It is high symbolism. Signs are going up again around our world. The Christian church has put up some signs to guide men to the City of our God. In some places they have been torn down, or disregarded. But again we are putting up signs; painting some of them afresh, adjusting them where necessary. Humanity is on the march toward the Kingdom!—*Gordon W. Mattice, Westminster Church, Rochester, N. Y.*

'The Time to Buy the Future'

I recently read that in the very year when nazi bombings destroyed hundreds of Methodist churches in England, givings to the wider work of that church increased by £40,000. And there was no worse time in Europe than those decades following Napoleon's final defeat at Waterloo in 1815. England herself was almost destitute. Yet in those years there went out so many emissaries of the Christian gospel that Professor Latourette is able to say that the nineteenth century was the greatest period of Christian expansion since the days of Paul. Most people would say those days following Napoleon's overthrow were too bad for any ventures of faith, but those who belonged to Christ said, "This is the time to buy the future"—and out they went!—*Arthur Organ, guest preacher at Knox United Church, Winnipeg, Can.*

'Unless I Had Believed'

A town in England had been bombed one moonlit night by the Germans. When workers were clearing away the debris they found on top of a heap of rubbish a sailor's Prayer Book, open at the 27th Psalm, with this verse marked: "I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." The incident was widely commented upon in Great Britain, for it seemed to many that the conviction expressed in that verse was the secret of that country's magnificent endurance during the worst days of her trial. The victory was won, not by battleships and tanks and rifles, not by armed men, but by dauntless faith in God. Unless they had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living, they had fainted with despair.—*Clarence E. Macartney, First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.*

The Key to a Righteous Peace

The church of Christ is the only unbroken fellowship that reaches around this planet. It is truly a global fellowship. Reports that come from returned missionaries show the reality of the fellowship of suffering among those whose hearts have been similarly transformed by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Madame Chiang Kai-shek voiced a profound truth when she pointed out that through all these years of China's development, all the agencies that have come to China, with but one exception, came because of what they could get rather than what they could give and left when they could get no more. The Christian church, she said, has been the single exception. The church came not to get but to give, she declared. The church has demonstrated her possession of the one key that can unlock the doors that lead to a righteous and permanent peace. That key is the message and spirit of Jesus Christ.—*F. W. Backemeyer, First Presbyterian Church, Gary, Ind.*

When the Lights Go Out

Last night I walked down dimmed-out 42nd street and Broadway, through crowds of restless people thronging places of amusement in a vain attempt to escape the dimout, the war, and thoughts of dark tomorrows. As I thought of how shadows of doubt had fallen over man's hopes much as the dimout had come over the city, from amid the crowd came strains of cheering and encouraging music: "When the lights go on again all over the world." Upon drawing nearer I found the musician to be a blind man! He was making his way down the street as he played. How much greater his darkness than that of the others on the street, yet what a difference of hope the inner light had made! "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."—*Robert Tobias, Union Seminary, New York.*

The Light of the Cross

During the civil war in Spain a member of the Society of Friends made a remark that appears to have become the motto of that society's work throughout the world, "I would rather light one candle than curse the darkness." That is the Christian thing to do. Suffering may be even more terrible and mysterious to the Christian than to others, but he is the only one who has the means for bringing light out of the world's darkness. It is the cross that gives him this power. In the cross we have the outstanding illustration of how Christ took evil and pain and used the opportunities of them to the full. He made the cross the means of the world's redemption. The cross came, not out of ease and comfort, but out of sorrow, suffering, anguish. And it came about that the works of God have been made supremely manifest through the cross of Christ.—*Lester E. Kemper, Kennedy Heights Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

A Philosopher's 'Faith-Ladder'

I am told that William James, the great Harvard philosopher, always closed his last class lecture each year with these words which he called his "Faith-Ladder":

"On the first round of the ladder we say of a momentous view of life and religion, that it is a possible view, it is not self-contradictory, it is not absurd;

"On the second round we say it might be true, so far as actual facts are concerned;

"On the third round we say it may be true now for all that anybody knows;

"On the fourth we add that it is fit to be true, it ought to be true;

"On the fifth we affirm it must be true;

"Well, then we say at the top of the ladder, it shall be true (at any rate for me) because I am going to adopt it as my truth and live by it henceforth."—*H. Richard Rasmussen, Blackburn College.*

25 Cents a Copy ntered as second-class matter May 14, 1942, at Post Office at Chicago, Ill., under the act of arch 3, 1879. Published monthly by The Christian Century Press, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill. **Two Dollars a Year**

The Pulpit

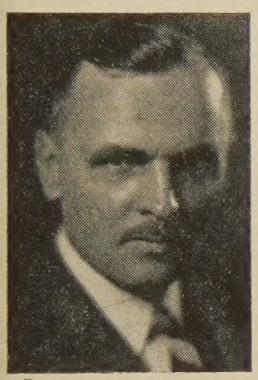
CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, *Editor*

VOLUME XIV CHICAGO, DECEMBER 1943 NUMBER 12

The Magnificat

By CHARLES H. HEIMSATH

THE FLORISTS have a slogan, "Say it with flowers." St. Luke, when he wrote the Christmas story, might have paraphrased such a slogan to read, "Say it with music." He surrounded the birth of Jesus with songs, fragments of songs, and themes for songs—the "Ave Maria" of the angel Gabriel, the "Benedictus" first of Elizabeth and later of Zacharias, the "Magnificat" of Mary, the "Gloria in Excelsis" of the angels, the "Nunc Dimittis" of Simeon. That is as it should be, for the birth of Jesus was the most joyous event that has ever happened in this sad old world.



James S. Stewart, the distinguished Scottish preacher, said: "I think that songs and hymns and music can carry us nearer to the burning heart of the Advent message than all the sermons and discourses in the world." And Alexander Pope asked, "What will a child learn sooner than a song?" Yes, and what will he remember longer? If I should preach with the "tongues of men and of angels," all of you, children and adults alike, would soon forget my words, but if I can teach you a song, you would carry the melody in your hearts.

The "Magnificat" of Mary is one of the noble songs of Christian worship. Let me tell you the circumstances under which it came. When the angel Gabriel saluted the holy mother with the original "Ave Maria," he promised that she should bear a child who should be named "Jesus," for he was to be "the Son of the Most High," and "of his kingdom there should be no end." Because this wonderful news was too good to keep, she hastened to tell it to her cousin, Elizabeth, who herself was soon to be the mother of another child of promise, John the Baptist. The meeting of the two gentle women, each of whom was to bring into the world a holy child, was a tender event. As soon as Elizabeth beheld Mary, she sang her rapturous "Benedictus," which begins, "Blessed art thou among women."

Mary responded with her inspired "Magnificat," which is one of the grand songs of Christmas. The name comes from its opening word in the *Vulgate,* or Latin Bible. In fact all of the Christmas songs are named from their first words in Latin, because in the early centuries when they were sung in that language as a part of the Catholic liturgy, they were named, as now, by their opening words. Mary's "Magnificat" is a poem in four strophes, or stanzas, which most of the great composers have further immortalized with a noble musical setting.

I

Let us now look at the song, strophe by strophe. *The first stanza gives joyful recognition of God as Savior.*

My soul doth magnify the Lord
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.
For he hath looked upon the low estate of his handmaid:
For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

We use the term "Savior" so often that we seldom realize what a tremendous thing it is to call God by that name. We reverence the Divine as Creator; we fear him as Judge; we honor him as King of Kings; we trust him as Heavenly Father. To be "Savior" is not quite like any of these but is inclusive of them and is somehow deeply appealing to the helplessness of the human spirit.

When Rickenbacker and his men saw our navy plane soaring above them, they knew in a thrilling moment what a "savior" means. In California is a monument to a dog who rescued a little girl from drowning—you see how grateful we are even to a dog who is a savior! When we think of the doctor who saves the life of a loved one, or of a fireman who rescues a person from a burning building, or of an autoist who turns into the ditch to avoid striking a child, we come to some realization of what a savior is in purely physical terms.

But Mary praised Jesus as the Savior of the soul. He redeems us from our evil dispositions, from our destructive hates, from our disintegrating fears. More than that, he saves the soul in the life to come, bestowing the gift of life eternal. James S. Stewart gives us some understanding of what a Savior of the soul means when he describes, in searching and concrete terms, our common *need* of spiritual help:

> Take any gathered company of people—think of the troubled spirits that are there among them, baffled and bewildered because life has treated them unkindly, and yet keeping their heads up, and making no complaint; some worried about their health, wondering how long they will be able to keep going, and what will happen to their dear ones when they finally have to give in; men out in the world, bearing the burden and heat of the day, and strained almost to the limit of their endurance by the fierce competition of this modern age; fathers and mothers anxious about children whose characters seem subtly changing, losing something of the frankness and fineness and tenderness that once was there; young people grappling with temptations which they have never been able to tell to anyone; souls that have gone down defeated in the fight, despising themselves for their defeat, eager for some secret that will turn defeat to victory; lives that

have had their hour of thrilling joy and springtime, and then it has vanished, and the world has grown gray and chill and wintry, and weary all life's journey now, on to the very end; conflicts which none can understand except the one who has to face them; lonelinesses that hurt; disabilities that handicap; renunciations that are a crown of thorns; memories that bless, and memories that burn, and memories that are a crucifixion.

I do not know into what category of need you and I come. Perhaps we fall into two or three of these, or into other unmentioned categories. But whatever the need of the soul, God is our Savior.

II

The second strophe is in praise of the power of God.

For he that is mighty hath done to me great things;
And holy is his name.
And his mercy is unto generations and generations
Of them that fear him.

In one of the Psalms it is said of God, "Thy gentleness hath made thee great." Mary likewise discovered that the secret of God's greatness is his mercy. Some men express their power by their cruelty; God always shows his might by his grace. Hendrik Van Loon in his *Lives* characterizes Thomas Jefferson as the greatest American because of his cultural superiority. Since he was a true aristocrat in spirit, he was a true democrat in action. A small person often tries to show superiority by making others appear inferior, but a large person is so sure of himself that he can treat all men as equals.

Dr. Fosdick preached a Christmas sermon a few years ago called "The Decisive Babies of the World." Only the wise men see that a baby can be more decisive than a battle. He reminds us that in 1809 most people might have thought the great one was Napoleon who was master of Europe, but only a madonna would have perceived in that unhappy year the greatness latent in the unnoticed births of Darwin, Lincoln, Gladstone, Tennyson, Edgar Allen Poe, Oliver Wendell Holmes and Cyrus W. McCormick. Today, amid the blare of the trumpets of war and the clash of embattled armies, we may be inclined to think that the conquering power lies with the dictators, with Adolph Hitler who has been boasting of the mightiest army in the world. But be not deceived! The power of true greatness may even now be potentially confined in some obscure baby born this year whose tiny hands may in time form the "Parliament of man, the Federation of the world." Of some baby it may forever be said:

Yet in the dark streets shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

III

The third strophe celebrates the promise of deliverance for all oppressed people.

He hath showed strength with his arm;
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart.
He hath put down princes from their thrones,
And hath exalted them of low degree.
The hungry he hath filled with good things;
And the rich he hath sent empty away.

It is not surprising that St. Luke, who was the friend of the poor, should have preserved such treasures as this song of Mary, the first sermon of Jesus in Nazareth from the prophecy of Isaiah announcing deliverance to the oppressed, and the angelic promise of peace. St. Luke has helped to make Christmas a time both of joy for childhood and of hope for the poor. Now Jesus had no grudge against the rich; but his moral indignation was reserved for those who exploited children for profit or who exploited men and women for greed.

Mary looked forward with such confidence that she saw already the time when justice not only *is* but *was* the order of the day. Notice how the song goes on into the future with the past tense, six Greek aorists being used, as though justice for all men had already long since been accomplished: "showed strength," "scattered the proud," "filled the hungry," "put down the mighty," "exalted the low," "sent the rich empty away." Let us have something of Mary's faith—let us believe in peace through justice as though it were here already, and here forever!

In another one of his imagined conversations, Van Loon has Montaigne, Rabelais and Erasmus discuss the way out for humanity from all of its sorrow. These great humanists, surprisingly enough, agree that we have already found deliverance in the twofold Christian law of love of God and man. Pessimism always enters at the point of human refusal to accept the salvation God has offered. There are a good many cynics today who despair of humanity's ever being willing or able to obey in social relations the Christian law of life. The amazing quality of Mary's faith is that she believed that society is wise enough and good enough to be saved by Christ!

IV

The fourth strophe is in some respects the most remarkable of all upon the lips of Mary. *It affirms the promised deliverance of the nation.*

He hath given help to Israel his servant,
That he might remember mercy
(As he spake unto our fathers)
Toward Abraham and his seed forever.

What should an ignorant peasant woman know or care about God's promise to the nation? Why should her fond hopes turn to Israel? Why should any woman today recall the heritage and destiny of America? We have heard more than once the despairing cry, "Nothing but a miracle can save civilization." But of course Mary knew that the miracle which could save Israel and America and all the nations of the world had already happened. It was not the miracle of Christ's holy conception which was in her mind. The miracle in this case was not that a holy child was decisive, or divine, but that the prophetic dream for the nation was fulfilled. To be sure God

honored humanity when he used a man for our redemption, but the wonder here was that the hopes of the race are now at long last answered.

We hear much in these days about a "second front," by which we mean another military offensive against the "fortress of Europe" to relieve the pressure upon Russia. Times come when we are forced to use physical means to gain spiritual ends. But our people are not working because they *want* guns, nor fighting because they *believe* in war. By the stern duty of conflict we must open all the closed highways to understanding, cooperation and peace as ways of life. Though we must often win on the physical front before we can ever hope to win on the spiritual, humanity's final victory is always on that second front. Or, to put the matter differently, physical mastery would never be worth the winning unless we also conquer on the spiritual front. Christmas means, for the brave spirit of youth and for the flagging faith of age, that a nation dedicated to the ultimate goals of the spirit is unconquerable. It reaffirms the simple miracle Mary saw, that physical victory can never be decisive, but that spiritual victory has already been won.

"V for Victory"—what a touching slogan that is in this dark midseason of the war! People have cried bitterly, "How can we celebrate Christmas when nations are fighting?" But the true miracle of Christmas is never more poignant than when times are dark and hopes are low. Listen again to the canticle of Mary as she sings the victory which God has promised to the nations! Civilization is not doomed and humanity is not caught in a blind alley. Nor is a world of brothers a wistful but forlorn hope. Christmas boldly affirms that disillusioned peoples are stubbornly fighting rearguard engagements against the impact of the divine redemption.

Into the dark stream of our common life has flowed a fresh current of a faith which is irresistible. Into the maelstrom has entered an eternal dynamic. Call the glorious redemption at Christ's birth the "truth of song," but also remember that the race has always sung its deepest realities and has forever lived by truth which it could never describe but only carry in its heart for generations as a creative melody.

A foreign missionary's little son here in America at school always kept his father's picture above his desk. Visiting him one Christmas, his teacher asked, "What do you want most this year?" Looking up at the beloved face above him, the lad replied, "I want my father to step out of his frame." We are chosen to inherit the benediction of those who, not having seen, believe. But the living truth in the "Magnificat," of God as Savior, of power in divine grace, of promise for the oppressed, of redemption for the nations can "step out" of the lovely Christmas setting and move again among us—with victory.

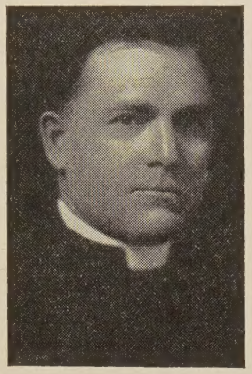
God rests our neighbors' good upon our toil and thought. Why not upon our prayers? He has so ordered our days that we live in mutual reliance. . . . We must not fail those whose weal depends upon our toil and thought—and prayer. George A. Buttrick.

The Prophetic Day

By Joseph Fort Newton

Unto you is born this day a Savior, a Babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. Luke 2:11, 12.

ONCE AGAIN the journeying months have brought us to the day of all the year the best—Christmas Day, with its cheer, its joy, and its gentle good will. We have national holidays of deep historic meaning and beauty; but this day is a day in the calendar of humanity—a day dedicated to the childhood and the home. Only one other day can compete with Christmas in our regard; that is Easter Day, with its "song of those who answer not, however we may call"; and, being Christian days, they are both days of hope. Is it not fitting that we have a festival of the dawn of life linked in our faith with the Easter hope at sunset?



Bachrach

What unaccountable blessings came to the world with one little Child, born of poor parents in an obscure nook in a small country long ago, and who, without sword or pen, divided the story of man into before and after! What influence—nameless, ineffable, appealing—lay sleeping in that manger, to be liberated at length, like the winds of Elmos, changing the moral and spiritual climate of the earth! There shone a light that can never fail, revealing the Spirit of God and the meaning of life, making mother and child forever sacred, and softening the heart of the world. When one considers these things, one is constrained to accept the story of the Nativity—told with such dignity, restraint and beauty—as the only true account of the origin of such gentle, persuasive power.

WHEN HEAVEN VISITED EARTH

What a record it is, linking the far-off pilgrim stars with the cradle of a little Child, as if to tell us that no hope dawns in the human heart that is not hailed in Heaven! It shows us once more, if we be wise, that the highest truth is born in lowly places, clad in humble garb befitting the humility of God, attended by simple shepherd sentiments, and that if we would find truth that is life we must follow our starry ideals, no matter how far they lead us—like the hoary star-gazers of the East who journeyed afar, following the gleam. Always the great introductions of God to the mind of man are through the great ideals of man—the ideal being the East, whence, in each new age, the starlight breaks upon our dim world to lead us to a better West. They who seek find; they who follow arrive; and he only is worthy of the truth who, forsaking a wisdom that is not wise, makes adventure to find it new-born of love and awe and wonder.

How beautiful it all is—an arch of hope spanning

our mortal years from the cradle to the grave. What wonder that we gather at the cradle, by which we are saved, if saved at all, not less than by the Cross. For, as the life of Jesus began in a cradle, and unfolded in the growing soul of a babe, a boy, a man, covering all his days from Bethlehem to Olivet, so, to be of any value, our Christianity must be inwrought into the whole of our life, from dawn to dusk. To use the powers of man in the faith of a little child, to combine the child sense of wonder and joy with the hard facts with which long years make us familiar—that is a secret of life too simple to be found out.

A STORY OF MAJESTY AND MUSIC

Let me ask you to do one thing for me on Christmas morning, and only one. Take down that golden little Book which tells the story of Jesus, and read the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke. Read it without any theory; read it as if you had never seen it before, and let the story tell itself to your heart. Let the simple majesty of its beauty and the ineffable music of its lines steal over your mind, and you will enter once more the soul of youth, with whatever of regret, but with a sense of rebirth into your earlier, better, blither self. It will awaken within you the child that is never lost, but only blurred, in the man and woman. No wisdom find we there save that of innocence and beauty. There is a world duplicate of our own, but disinfected of all the things that make us sad for, or hateful of, ourselves or others. There we learn that we are of finer stuff than old Time has turned us into —such stuff as dreams are made of, and that in what men call dreamland is our true home. Let us go there, and when we come back let us bring some of it with us in trailing clouds of glory to glamor the drab days that are but a muddled memory of what they should be.

One must have the heart of a child and the soul of a poet if he would read the story of Jesus—the Biography of Pity, the Memoirs of Love, the Sovereign Beauty of this world. God will not hang his pictures in a cold gray light. It is the poet who knows, and if God lets me fulfill half my dream, my hope is to make a Poet's Life of Jesus, telling in rhythmic numbers, in tales and golden histories, of the birth of God in man, assuring man of his life and destiny in God. Milton will sing for me of the Nativity, in lines as noble as ever were molded by mortal lips, while Elizabeth Browning will tell, as only a woman can tell, of the tingling joy and nameless prophecies in the mother-heart of Mary. Sidney Lanier, whose soul was a song, will sing of the visit of the Wise Men—how grave bards, hoary star-students, and pilgrim seekers after truth, bowed at the cradle of heavenly genius. Oliver Holmes will show us the Boy in the temple, questioning the doctors—with those starry eyes, strangely bright, divinely tender, searching the hidden places of the soul. On the story will go, setting truth to music, and men will read it in the warm and misty light of tears and know the truth as it is in Jesus.

REALITY STRANGER THAN FANCY

There be men who say that the life of Jesus is only poetry, as if poetry were other than the truth, whereas it is the effort of man to reach the far-off peaks of truth. These Gradgrinds say that the Christ story is a fancy woven in a worshipful dream, and they are too wise to mistake fancies, however tender, for realities. They look upon the rest of us with a smile, half of pity and half of scorn, and ask for the haggard, old and ugly fact. Very well, let it be so. Let us have the facts, and since we are to have the facts, let us begin near at home.

Take Shakespeare, and try to account for the wonder of his amazing genius, its fertility and splendor. Go back into the hills of his ancestry, and try to find the spring from which so great a stream could flow. Search how you will, with all diligence, but you will not find it. No one can tell whence came that creative magic which, touching an old, rude tale, evoked the majestic and mournful soul of Hamlet—symbol of our humanity with its haunting hesitation and its wistful perplexity. By what secret did he give shape to the divine Desdemona, whose soul was as white as snow, as delicate as a flower, as tender as a prayer? Can you find along the banks of the Avon the birthplace of Miranda—that sweet daughter of wonder? No one has ever found it. Genius is a mystery whose hidings are veiled; God breathes it, and the rest is beyond our ken.

Let one of our wise men sit down, then, and tell me the facts about Shakespeare, not mere names and dates, which are only the shells of truth, but the story of his soul and whence came his magic. We want to know the real facts about this master of the world of tragedy and song. If anyone attempts to tell it, his pen will begin to dance and glow with poetry, and before he closes he will be telling how some fairy kissed the bard of Stratford with her soft lips, and gave him a wand. Maybe he will tell us how the very air was a-quiver with song, and that Vedic poets from India and grave seers from Greece came to pay him homage. Then he will be close to the cradle of Truth, for in the land of the soul facts are more romantic than fairy tales.

WHAT CHRISTMAS REVEALS

Come now and read the gospel story in this higher, clearer air. Throw your petty little theory out of the window, and look at the face of Christ, and tell me if that sweet old story, so far from being a dream woven on the loom of faith, is not a calm, sober and wonderfully restrained history! It is a leaf let fall from the Book of Life—as good an account as can be put into mortal words of the origin of such a being as Jesus.

What ineffable truths, what unspeakable prophecies, lie hidden in the Christmas story! For one thing, it bears witness to the reality, beauty and benignity of that unseen order which envelops our ruder life like a soft atmosphere. He is blind and deaf who does not know that above us and around us there is a higher, finer world, whence all sweet revelations, all happy miracles, descend. To our dull eyes its facts are wonders and its continents are dreams; but it is more real than the solid earth on which we live, in which we sleep at last. Of the reality of that world, with its

light and music, its open windows of divine surprise, Jesus is the supreme witness, and it is no wonder that it became for the moment visible and vocal when he who made it so real and vivid was born. "Fear not," said the angel to the shepherds who trembled in the light of a world higher than their own. That is ever the message of Jesus—that the unseen is a place of beauty, not of horror. What this means in driving fear from the human heart, no words can tell.

If the unseen, before which man has so long crouched in terror, is a realm of light and love, eloquent with glad tidings, we have a right to ring the joy bells. To this vision philosophy comes at last, if it be true to the deepest facts of life, where the truth abides. Hear these words in which a noble thinker sums up his vision of "The Realm of Ends," the final result of all his high thinking:

"And so God is love. What must that world be that is worthy of such love? The only worthy object of love is just love; it must, then, be a world that can love God. But love is free; in a ready-made world it could have no place. Hence the long and painful discipline of evolution, with its dying to live—the putting off the earthly for the likeness of God. In such a realm of ends we trust that God is love indeed and love the final law. We cannot live or move without faith, that is clear. Is it not, then, rational to believe the best, and can there be a better?"

GOD IN MAN—BASIS FOR DEMOCRACY

But we cannot love God unless there be something within us akin to the divine, and it is God in man which Christmas discloses in its story of the Eternal Spirit taking the form of a child. This it is that links us with the far-off, journeying stars, and becomes the authentic basis of all the high idealisms and heroic optimisms of the race. Man in his loneliness seeks God, who is his Father, and seeking him, finds him—in himself! Finding a new star out of the edge of the sky is a tiny fact beside the discovery of God in the soul. The hope of our race lies in the birth and growth of the divine in man, refining lust into love, and greed into goodness. This is the prophecy of the Christmas vision, and it is a truth that lights up our mortal twilight with joy, changing even dull death into a last enchantment.

God in man—in all men, though mayhap in some men more vividly than in others—here is the real basis of all democracy worth the name. This is more than hinted to us in the Christmas scene, where grave seers and simple shepherds bow before a beauty in whose presence they are one in wonder, hope and joy. Whether rich or poor, learned or untaught, we are all of a piece, a mixture of dirt and deity, with faith and fears in common. Make no mistake; down in his heart, every man is as noble, as vile, as divine, as diabolic, and as lonely, as yourself. Since we have the same spark of divinity within us, the same dogs of passion at our heels, and the same starry ideals above us, it is therefore that we should love one another. Why should we not give full play to our effort to escape from our loneliness through endeavor to know, to understand and to help our fellows?

THE CHILD—A SAD WORLD'S HOPE

If Easter teaches us hope in the life to come, Christmas asks us to hope for the life that now is. And the hope of the world is the child. Here the everlasting enterprise of education finds its reason and its sanction. The child holds in his hand, chubby and dirty, the future of the race, our hope of social beauty, national sagacity and human welfare. He is the custodian of whatever truth and worth we may bequeath to the times to come; the windows in which at sunset we see the morning light of a new day. In him we live again, if in no other way—save in the memory of God who does not forget. Nor does any man do more to bring to earth the Kingdom of Heaven than he who takes care that his child is nobly and sweetly born. A child born in purity and honor will not need to be born again, unless some killing sin slay him by the way. It is no wonder that Wordsworth found in the heart of childhood hints of a life that shall endless be.

How different the Kingdom of Jesus from the empires amid whose contents he was born! His spirit made vital in his life, his truths made vivid in his words—these are his Kingdom, and it is this alone of which it can be said that it has no end. It cometh not by observation, but subtly as the ether fills the eternal spaces, breathing through each life and making souls fit for the life of God. So then it is that, on the day of his birth, the devout imagination of the world recreates the past, and Bethlehem becomes as real as the home of our childhood. The manger, the mother, the babe, the shepherds, the angels—these are sounds and scenes we seem to have heard and witnessed. Though that picture belongs to the far past, yet does its holy light linger with us to exalt and bless.

THE ANGELS' SONG PROPHETIC

Over the armed camp of that hard old Roman world the song of the angels rang out, like the bells of the City of God, proclaiming "Peace on earth among men of good will." How far off it must have seemed in that day; how far off it seems today! Hate hangs like a pall over the race. Nevertheless, it will come true. It is not a myth. It is not a mockery. Because it is far off we know that it is not our own music, but was sent into the soul of man by One who is as far above us as the stars are above the mist. It means much that we can hear it, despite the din of war and the sob that follows the evening sun around the world. Not in our day, not in many days, perhaps, but at last by the sweet might of him of whom it sings, the earth will fill up with men of good will, and war will be no more. Led by him

> We shall come, not blindly impelled, but free,
> To an orbit of order at last,
> And a finer peace shall be wrought out of pain
> Than the stars in their courses know;
> Ah, me! but my soul is in sorrow till then,
> And the feet of the years move slow.

Wherefore is it that we live for one day by the law of love and then turn again quickly to rend each other in strife? Why do nations at war lift hands in prayer to him who taught us to love our enemies? Why do men who deny Christ yield, for one day, to the spell of his spirit and the teaching of his words of charity and pity? Is there any explanation of such a discord between dream and deed? To my thought, yes. It lies in the fact that Christmas is a prophetic day, looking not so much backward as forward. It belongs to an order of society not yet attained; to a Christianity not yet realized; to a coming but yet distant time when men shall lay aside their weapons and learn to love one another. God be thanked for a dream so divine—for a day of poetry and prophecy amid gray days of prose and long nights of woe!

WHEN JOY RETURNS FOR A DAY

How we remember our Christmas celebrations—those of old time, when the home circle was unbroken, and the later ones with their vacant chairs. Yet even when we are most alone, there is always someone to bless, on that day, in the spirit of him who is so great a blessing; someone to remember in the name of him whose life is the greatest memory in the world. We work and plan that the child may have his toy, and the friend some token of our regard. The son of toil, who, on other days, may have regretted that young lips ever named him "father," on that day sits happy by his fireside. Then, too, the weary mother forgets her care, and is lifted for a brief time into something resembling joy.

Welcome the spirit of Christmas—symbol of the Eternal Child and the "cradle endlessly rocking." It is needed in this old world, if only to keep alive the souls of us, and to renew our faith in almost forgotten dreams. May it flourish to the confounding of all unkindness, all uncleanness. It takes us down from our towering pride, and teaches us humility and sweet charity. It brings us, on one day at least, to a simplicity of faith in the Golden Age, free of the shadow of the Night and the fear of the Morrow.

Blessed Christmas Day—it rescues us, for a moment, from the tyranny of things, and gives such as have lost their child-heart hope that it will come back to them again sometime, somewhere—if not on earth, mayhap out yonder with the dwellers of the City on the Hill.

CHRISTIANITY faces today the most difficult task in all its long history. It is a moment of destiny in the life of the world. If tomorrow is to find a decent and progressive world it will not come as the result of mere chance and drifting. It will be a planned economy of the spirit. The church may well re-examine in this crucial hour its fundamental motivations and its spiritual techniques. No complacent acceptance of things as they have been will be sufficient to grapple with this hour. It is highly essential that the Christian forces of the world should dispassionately and objectively look at the church's strength—and its weaknesses.

PAUL B. KERN.

The Disturbing Jesus

BY HOWARD J. CONN

And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts. Matthew 8:34.

WHEN we think of Jesus we invariably think of him as blessing the children, healing the sick, forgiving the sinful and comforting the sorrowful. It is well that we do so, for the ministry of Jesus to us should be one of comfort and of inspiration. However, if we think of Jesus only in these pleasant terms, we neglect one whole side of his preaching which is essential to any complete understanding of his life. Jesus was not only a comforter; he was also a disturber. He not only brought peace to the human soul; he also brought turmoil and tension. No man was ever crucified for speaking comforting words. The price of self-sacrifice is paid only by those with courage to express convictions that run counter to the deep-set prejudice of the majority.

"The Disturbing Jesus," as we shall think of our Lord this morning, came to stab people awake by sending the sword of truth deep into the hard-set ways of doing things.

It is an interesting study in the workings of the human mind to note the way in which we have dulled the message of Jesus by emphasizing what he came to bless rather than what he came to rebuke, with the result that if a person is not seeking a special blessing he can very easily be totally indifferent to the message.

THE CRUELTY OF INDIFFERENCE

In the Master's time people were disturbed and repented, or else they were disturbed, refused to repent and therefore sought to crucify. But they were all disturbed. Today people can simply be indifferent. As Studdert-Kennedy has expressed it:

When Jesus came to Golgotha they hanged him on a tree,
They drove great nails through hands and feet, and made a Calvary; . . .
When Jesus came to Birmingham, they simply passed him by,
They only just passed down the street, and left him in the rain. . . .
The crowds went home and left the streets without a soul to see,
And Jesus crouched against a wall and cried for Calvary.

The Disturbing Jesus would rather be crucified than passed by, for only thus could he know that his words were reaching the human heart. Certainly during his own lifetime Jesus was never troubled by indifference, for those who heard him were either for him or against him. This tension in which he lived and preached is

apparent throughout the Gospel records. The enthusiastic reception he received is suggested by such words as, "and the common people heard him gladly," and by the report of the multitudes who followed that they might so much as touch the hem of his garment.

But the Gospel records also make clear the undercurrent of opposition on the part of those whom Jesus disturbed. We read that on numerous occasions "the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying . . . " And again, "then went the Pharisees and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk." One of the most revealing episodes was one in which the people of a city came out and besought Jesus that he would depart out of their coasts! We like to think of our Lord as being welcome everywhere, as being well received. The truth is that many people considered him a trouble-maker, and they thanked him to keep away from their villages. They did not want to be disturbed in their complacency and their profitable ways, and so they sought to keep Jesus away or shut him up. But because Jesus was fearless and continued steadfast, the selfishness of those who were disturbed but refused to repent simply had to crucify this teacher.

THE CHURCH'S DISTURBING MINISTRY

The records make perfectly clear that Jesus intended that this disturbing ministry should be continued by his disciples. He said that he sent them forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, and that they should be ready to shake the dust off their feet and move to another city when they were not well received in one. He told them to shout from the housetops what God whispered in their ears, and not to be afraid of those who could kill only their bodies but had no power to kill the soul.

We of the Christian church of today may well feel a certain sense of guilt when we ask ourselves how faithfully we have carried out this disturbing ministry. In defense of the church one can truly say that it has pricked the conscience of men in condemning harsh prison treatment, slavery, the liquor traffic, gambling and war. On many fundamental issues the church has disturbed the easy conscience of the world and has taken leadership in moral advance.

However, in the spirit of soul-searching honesty we must admit that most of us want the church to give us coddling comfort rather than disturbing criticism. Yet it was people like us that Jesus criticized and came to disturb. I believe in the church, though more for what it ought to be than for what it often is; for if Jesus came to earth today I am afraid he would be disgusted with much of our church life, and he would dismiss most of us ministers as a group of coddling nursemaids.

CRITICISM A LOST ART

A layman remarked recently, "When it comes to comforting people in trouble and encouraging people who are perplexed, most ministers do a fairly good job; but when it comes to correcting people in their faults and expressing convictions with which the congregation would not agree, these same ministers fail miserably." There is a great deal of truth in this indictment. The result is that our churches tend to avoid issues on which there is tension or feeling, and our membership is very rarely disturbed out of its complacency.

We do not like ministers who tell us that we ought to pay our employees higher wages, that our economic system is sick, that people have a right to be conscientious objectors, that we are not bringing up our children properly, that we are the cause of friction in the Ladies' Aid, or that we don't treat in a neighborly way people who live on a certain street. We do not like ministers who speak so frankly and disturbingly, and so we beseech them that they should depart out of our coast—which in plain English means, we fire them!

Let us look a little more closely at the Disturbing Jesus. Whom did he disturb?

'A FANATIC IN THE FAMILY'

In the first place, Jesus disturbed his own family. Only his mother understood and had confidence in him. His brothers could see only that he left their carpentry business at the busy season to wander about preaching to people his crazy notions, and that he was bringing disgrace to the family by getting into trouble with the authorities. A few winters ago on Broadway there was a play entitled "Family Portrait," which depicts the reaction of his ministry on Jesus' family. One of the brothers asks: "What I want to know is why it had to happen to us! Why did *we* have to have a fanatic in the family?"

There is a scene in which his mother and brothers go after Jesus to bring him back to their carpentry shop. They find him preaching to three thousand people on the shore of Galilee. As is recorded in the twelfth chapter of Matthew, they send up a message to him, "Your mother and brothers want to see you." Whereupon Jesus repeats the message to the crowd, and then asks: "Who is my mother? and who are my brothers? Behold, you are all my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." His brothers were furious that he should have so embarrassed them before the multitude; but Jesus' mother understood, and she was happy that he was able to use their simple message to teach a great lesson of human brotherhood and discipleship. The rest of the family were only disturbed and resentful because their pride and ambition were injured.

Sometimes, on certain issues and in certain company, you and I are embarrassed to acknowledge our discipleship and our membership in the larger family of Jesus. If we are, we need the disturbing ministry of our Master to summon us to a deeper loyalty.

HOW JESUS REBUKED SINNERS

In the second place, Jesus disturbed the open sinners. Sin in its baser forms could not live in his presence, and so sinners who came into close contact with him were changed in all their ways. The woman taken in adultery, Mary Magdalene of evil reputation, the thief on the cross—all these had the character of their

lives changed because Jesus entered into them with his disturbing presence. The most striking example is the dishonest taxgatherer, Zaccheus. Everybody knows that Zaccheus was corrupt, but after Jesus had lunch at his house, Zaccheus was disturbed out of his dishonesty and restored fourfold everything he had taken by false accusation.

Yet it was not with the open sinners that Jesus' disturbing ministry was most effective, for people who are admitted lawbreakers do not mind being accused. They often welcome a healer who can help them overcome their weakness. Jesus touched a more delicate spot when he condemned individuals who in the eyes of the crowd were perfectly respectable. The people whom Jesus truly disturbed were those whose pride was hurt when Jesus uncovered some of the weaknesses of the soul ordinarily hidden from public view. In other words, the people whom Jesus most disturbed were those—like you and me—who considered themselves respectable.

HIS SCORN OF THE 'PIOUS'

In the third place, Jesus disturbed the pious. The term "pious" is a very poor one, but it may be taken as descriptive of those who make so much of the outward forms of religion but who inwardly have hearts cold to God and human need. One of the most intolerant and conceited laymen I know is always talking about God and prayer. Jesus disturbed those who used pious language and terminology, saying "Lord, Lord!" but did not do the will of God.

Jesus disturbed those for whom prayer meant primarily a ritual act in public, for he said it was better that they should enter into a closet where no one could see them and there lift up their hearts in a transaction known only to God.

Jesus disturbed those who were eager to pray but slow to forgive. He said that if a man, beginning to pray, had anything against another he ought first to make peace with his neighbor. He told the parable of the steward who expected his master to forgive him a debt but who was unwilling to forgive his debtor a hundredth part as much.

Jesus disturbed the self-satisfied piety of the Pharisee who stood and prayed, "God I thank thee that I am not as other men," for he said that everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased. He had mercy on the publican who sincerely repented, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

You and I may perhaps be in the group of the pious; if we are, we need the disturbing ministry of Jesus to quicken us to our hypocrisy.

JESUS' ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PROUD

In the fourth place, Jesus disturbed the proud. There is the story of Jesus' being invited to dine at the home of a distinguished and proud Pharisee, Simon. While they were at table a woman known to be a sinner came in penitence and humility that she might wash the feet of the Master with oil, an oriental courtesy which the proud Pharisee had neglected to extend his preacher guest. Simon thought to himself, "If this Jesus were really a prophet as he claims, he would know that this woman is a sinner and would not let her touch his feet." Jesus read the thoughts of Simon, and made it clear to his host that there is room for no such pride in the Kingdom of Heaven. A truly repentent person is forgiven, and is restored rather than cast off. Such a repentant person is nearer the Kingdom than is a proud man who in his cold heart cannot forgive.

Jesus disturbed those who liked to think of themselves as better than others, for he said that all persons belong to the fold of the Divine Shepherd, and that the Shepherd would give his life for the least worthy of all.

Jesus disturbed those who were quick to criticize others but slow to acknowledge the faults in themselves; he said, "Why beholdest thou the splinter that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own?"

You and I may perhaps be in the group of the proud, and if we are, we need the disturbing ministry of Jesus to quicken us out of our arrogance.

HE DISTURBED THE SELFISH

Finally, Jesus disturbed the selfish. He emphasized giving, sacrifice and selflessness as the keys to rich personalities, the most striking and inescapable paradox of human history. "Whosoever would gain his life, shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." After two thousand years psychologists are coming to recognize the truth of this in the realm of the human soul, and political scientists are coming to recognize the truth of it in the realm of social living.

There are many stories of the way in which Jesus disturbed the selfish who heard him. There was the rich young man whose possessions kept him from devotion—a sensitive, fine young man whose life must have been forever hauntingly disturbed by this flashing contact he had had with the Master. There was the other young man who paid no heed to the sermon Jesus was preaching but rushed up at the conclusion to ask him to persuade his brother to divide the inheritance. There was the mother of James and John to whom discipleship meant the privilege for her boys to sit at the right and left hand of the throne.

Jesus disturbed those whose love of possessions had dried the wells of human sympathy, for he told the parable of the rich man who gave no thought to the beggar at his gate until he lifted up his eyes from Hades and saw the beggar on Abraham's bosom.

Jesus disturbed those who thought that the richness of life consisted in the abundance of possessions, for he gave the parable of the rich man building larger barns on the night his soul was taken.

You and I may perhaps be in the group of the selfish; if we are, we need the disturbing ministry of Jesus to inspire us to a love higher than that of self.

JESUS' 'PEACE' NOT AN ANAESTHETIC

The richest blessing that a human life can seek is the peace of God, that peace which passeth all under-

standing. We do right in saying that Jesus gave to man a peace and a quietness not known before. But the peace that Jesus brought was not a deadening anaesthetic to make us oblivious to faults and problems. The peace of Jesus came to those who received his disturbing ministry, and who, prompted by it, overcame their sins and entered into a new and holy relation with their Heavenly Father. Very few are courageous enough to seek that higher peace. Robert Louis Stevenson was one. Toward the close of his life he wrote the lines entitled, "The Celestial Surgeon":

> Lord, Thy most pointed pleasure take
> And stab my spirit broad awake!
> Or, Lord, if too obdurate I,
> Choose Thou, before that spirit die,
> A piercing pain, a killing sin
> And to my dead heart run them in!

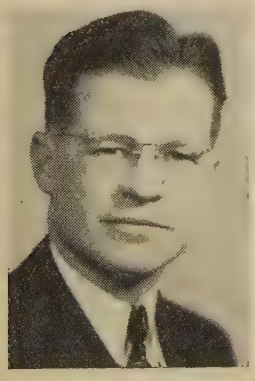
The heart that has been stabbed awake by the disturbing Jesus may be brought in humility to the throne of God where only is to be found perfect peace.

The One New Thing in Christianity

By A .T. DeGroot

A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another. John 13:34.

THE MOST SERIOUS danger to our faith is to suspect that there is nothing new or significant about it. A cause to which we can devote our full energy, a grand ideal of which we may dream until it commands our living—this is every man's greatest need. Men will die for a cause, gladly. They will leave homeland and comforts, resign their plans for careers and professions, and do all this with considered satisfaction if only they believe that what they lose and suffer makes for some better thing to come. The soul of man longs to hear the message of Peter the Hermit who preached the Crusade from Europe to the Holy Land. His slogan was, *"Deus Vult!"*—God wills it!



The present war makes us wonder about just this fact. Why are there no compelling slogans and so few song hits that catch its spirit and cast it into the drama of a grand crusade? With 70,000 American citizens now nearly two years in concentration camps without any reference or appeal to the Bill of Rights, it becomes impossible to resurrect the old banners of the First World War—"Make the world safe for democracy!" The best we can do is to talk in negatives, of what we're against. Even the four freedoms are carefully defined by one of their co-authors as having no meaning for India. The mighty resources of that subcontinent lie dormant, its giant strength slumbering, because we dare not grant it a place in the family of nations.

Shortly ago a cartoonist, perhaps unwittingly, captured the truth of our quandary. He showed several soldiers peeling potatoes from a huge pile, and one of them turning to the officer in charge to say, "Sergeant, we are making history, aren't we?" There is the problem of our lives, in the humdrum civilian chores, or in dangerous military action. If only they make a difference in destiny we can labor on, and live daringly. Likewise, in our Christian profession, what we want to know is, Is there anything vital, even revolutionary, about it? Even if it is but a small skirmish in the agelong battle against evil, Dr. Schweitzer can seem to lose himself among diseased Africans with small gratitude—for by his healing ministry he forwards God's plan for the future.

Is there anything new about Christianity? Yes, there is one new thing that has been added in the Christian faith. On just one occasion did Jesus claim to go beyond the revelation vouchsafed through the fathers of Israel. In the intimacy of the apostolic circles, when Judas had left the Last Supper, Jesus used the final fellowship hour to convey his single command, to reveal the uniqueness of his marching orders. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another."

I

These words were truly from the world's most commanding person. Jesus was never at a loss to know what to do. At the beginning of his ministry, because of the effrontery of his first sermon, fellow townsmen rushed him to a cliff where he might be thrown to his death, but Jesus took command of the crowd and passed through it, never to return to his home town. When in the midst of his career a storm threatened to engulf his whole party in a boat at sea, he stilled the tempest. His companions exclaimed, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him. At the close of his ministry he stood in utter self-possession before Pilate, who could only say, I find no fault in him.

Decisive though he was, the word "command" was seldom on his lips. When a Samaritan village refused to hear his preaching, James and John cried, Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elijah did? In reply, instead of rebuking the villagers, Jesus turned to his disciples and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives but to save them.

Once the Master said, Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you—but he immediately explained, These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me. Jesus commanded his disciples to good works, saying to the Twelve, Go preach and heal. Three times he commanded one of the apostles who

needed the repeated emphasis, Be a shepherd! In the climactic moments of the mount of ascension, Jesus' last words were, Make disciples; teach, and observe whatsoever I commanded you.

In the 15th and 16th chapters of the Gospel of John our Lord made it plain that many would arise to hate his gospel of love and those who preach it. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service to God. Such, said Jesus, have never really known him nor his Father.

II

One reason for our failure to grasp this shining new principle of life revealed by Jesus is the tragic misunderstanding of it by the best friends of the gospel and of the church. The central word "love" is terribly inadequate, in our language, to convey the richness and depths of the meaning of Jesus. To us, "love" cannot avoid a shadow of sentiment, if not of romance. All agree that it is "nice"—but we do not conceive it to be a practical power ruling men's basic impulses.

To Jesus, love was a tremendous force—a universal, natural force. Indeed, so great a power was it in his understanding that he did not speak of it lightly as a way of life for his disciples. Only with reserve and reverence did he commend the way of love in human relations as the rule of life with their fellows. No one sermon can reveal its depths and powers for the good of all men. We can only hint at its tremendous reserves of force for good which are scarcely more than tapped in Christian experience. But the *power* is here, all about us—as God is everywhere available.

God is love, says the divine Word, and he is longing to be known to us and used by us. Like electricity and its powers for light and health, so love awaits our use. Like electricity, this soul force, this dynamite of the divine personality bathes and immerses our every moment of being, but must be known and appreciated and understood and channeled into helpful power for the good of each and of whole societies of men. Ten thousand years from now the world will still be searching for further secrets of its resource and power.

At least three words in our speech are required to convey the fundamentals of "love." Some years ago the Federal Council of Churches announced a contest to rename its journal of information, which is still called simply the *Bulletin.* One contestant sent in the proposed title *Good Will*—for, he said, this is the heart of the message the churches derived from their common Master. Indeed, he added, the whole meaning of love is *active good will,* the purposive and initiating kind of benevolent will which causes a man in the act of worship to leave his gift short of the altar when he remembers there is a difference between himself and another, to go and take the responsibility upon himself of settling that difference before completing his act of worship before God. Such living is itself true worship. "The time cometh," said Jesus, when neither in special sanctuaries nor separated hours of stated days will men prove their adoration of the Father of Love, "but they shall worship him in spirit and in truth."

Love is the spirit and the truth about life that God yearns to reveal to his children. They, busy in their own wisdom, have little time nor the needed quietness of soul to permit the entrance of the word of life. But God, like the love that he is, suffereth long, and is kind; neither does he fail. And, whether there be brilliant prophecies from our accumulated wisdom, whether there be a tongue to bring humanity into a single language and family, whether there be pyramided knowledge upon knowledge, all this structure shall topple into ruin until our partial wisdom gives way to the one abiding principle of creative living—an active, initiating, constant attitude of good will.

God is the author of love, and its unswerving exemplar. From the dawn of conscience we are aware of our shortcomings and the missings of the mark of our high calling as children of God. He has every right, in terms of justice, to send his thunderbolts upon us for our sins. When have we not been at war with God through sins of omission and of direct violation of his will for us? Instead of thunderbolts he sent his Son—to love and to suffer our childish hates and revilings. All this God did in the confidence that we would little by little still our vain pride and human wisdom, and give his way of love a chance to do its life-giving work.

III

Love is the one new thing in Christianity. No competitors for the hearts of men are in the market place where love is offered. Its active good will is unique in Jesus' revelation. In Jewish thought, says Rabbi Samuel Schulman, in the official pamphlet Number Five of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, "there was lacking the motive of seeking to save human souls" (page 9). The head of the Orthodox Jewish school in a capital city presented a paper for my review on "the fundamentals of anti-semitism." The cause of anti-semitism, he argued, is that Christians are essentially idealists and dissatisfied with the world as it is. Jews, on the contrary, are basically practical men and do not try to achieve the impossible in human relations. Christians, unsuccessful in their high pursuits, seeing their Jewish brethren more fully realizing their less demanding goal, take out the sense of Christian failure in one of the very evils they seek to conquer—hatred; in this case, anti-semitism. At least, here is an acknowledgment that the ideal of active, unfailing good will in human relations is the unique goal of the Christian faith.

Certainly our Moslem contemporaries hold no brief for love as the way of life. Rejecting the cross, they make the curved sword their symbol. In the *Moslem-Sunrise,* a Mohammedan missionary magazine published in Chicago, the spiritual descendants of the Arab prophet frequently chide Christians for not having the courage to repudiate the impossible ideals and impractical rules of living that Jesus made basic in his sermons and deeds.

The Shinto religion, which Japan fain would make compulsory in Greater East Asia, has no patience with the Christian gospel of unceasing good will. A few years before the present hostilities, when the American Bible Society offered to supply all Japanese military men with copies of the New Testament, the authorities refused on the grounds that the Sermon on the Mount was subversive to the aims and philosophy and way of life of its soldiery. Without regard to the meaning of this insight for our own use of the Bible in wartime, one fact becomes crystal clear—Christianity alone holds the hope for a better way and a better day. Despite our shortcomings in understanding and using this power, in our "earthen vessels" we possess it, and some day we can hope to explore its meanings for personal and social good. Radium and healing x-rays have forever been all about us, but only in our generation have their healing powers been known. Likewise, in some better time, we shall understand the resources of the God of love.

IV

This is the one new thing in Christianity, repudiated by other faiths, but central in the gospel of the Man of Nazareth. Here is a plan for living which no people will master in a generation, nor in a millennium. Our children's children will inquire reverently into its power for the healing of the nations. No age will outgrow its program, for it is struck into our humanity from the mind of God. Thus it is only by faith, that divine power of reading the meaning of history, that we perceive the way the Father is at work among and for us. As an understanding poet puts it,

> The grass grows slowly up the hill
> With faith the torrent cannot kill,
> And rocks are rough, and still the clover
> The stony fields will yet run over—
> And I know nothing that the true,
> The good, the gentle cannot do.
>
> Woodlands that the winters sadden
> The leaves of Spring again will gladden;
> And so must life forever be—
> The gentle hands work patiently
> And yet accomplish more forever
> Than these too strong or those too clever.
>
> So toils an undiscouraged God
> And covers barren fields with sod,
> And so will hate and sin surrender
> To faith still strong and love still tender—
> And I know nothing that the true,
> The good, the gentle cannot do.

We know that when the Allied armies have destroyed the forces of tyranny and cruelty in the world, we shall have a technical peace. But how can we make that peace real and enduring? A world of peace and well-being, to survive, must find its inspiration in the leadership of a multitude of people who to Cain's ancient question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" have the courage to answer "Yes!"

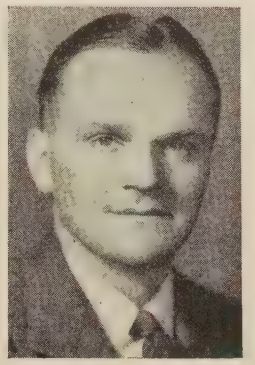
Wendell L. Willkie.

The Practicality of Jesus

By Fred E. Luchs

He knew what was in man. John 2:25b.

JESUS never stood on a street corner prating about the gilded boulevards of heaven. He went to men and talked about a cup of cold water, the widow's mite, a man planting a field, a bitter brother, a dissolute son. Each time a heckler or sincere seeker came to him with some bewildering question he would say, "Bring me a coin," or "A certain man had two sons . . . " or "When thou art bidden to a wedding . . . " or "There was a certain rich man . . . " Why do we say Jesus was a man of practical religion?



He was cradled in a practical religion. He knew his Scriptures—how the Hebrew religion had evolved out of practical affairs. It had to do not with ethereal forms and clouds, but with such matters as sheep, bullocks, diseases of animals; and as his religion grew he saw how it was concerned with God *and*—God and famine, God and food, God and battle, God and people. When any common element came into contact with a higher power, to him it was religious. With him there was no separation between the secular and the sacred. His Hebrew forefathers had related everything to God. There was nothing which stood outside the pale of his influence. Jesus had read Amos and Isaiah, and had seen how these prophets had cried aloud in righteous indignation when religion left out the practical—that is, when it became absorbed with ritual and form and sacrifice. He saw how certain prophets called the people back to practical religion. To help the widows and the poor; to be concerned, not with meaningless ritual, but with lifting the lower levels of society—that was the theme of the prophetic cry which Jesus heard in the Old Testament.

CARPENTRY SHOP EXPERIENCE

Jesus had a practical religion because he had devoted most of his life to the carpenter shop. This kept his feet on *terra firma*. He had spent his time, not in a post-graduate school or a monastery, but in working with his hands and in dealing with people. Over there stands a man who will say: "Jesus spoke in platitudes. He discussed life in a second-hand manner. He was impractical and an idealist." Studdert-Kennedy heard this charge too often and went home and wrote:

> I wonder what he charged for chairs at Nazareth.
> And did men try to beat him down
> And boast about it in the town—
> "I bought it cheap for half-a-crown
> From that mad Carpenter?"

And did they promise and not pay,
Put it off to another day;
O, did they break his heart that way,
My Lord, the Carpenter?

I wonder did he have bad debts,
And did he know my fears and frets?
The gospel writer here forgets
To tell about the Carpenter.

But that's just what I want to know.
Ah! Christ in glory, here below
Men cheat and lie to one another so;
It's hard to be a carpenter.

Because Jesus was a man steeped in practical affairs, men in every generation accepted him as their Savior. They have felt that here was a Man who knew men.

He leaned upon his carpenter shop training in interpreting religion. He tells us that houses and people need the same base—a strong foundation. "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and bent upon that house; and it fell."

LIVING UNDER FAMILY PRESSURE

Jesus had a practical religion because he lived within a large family, where religion is a necessity; where people give and take, where you can't wear your heart on your sleeve, where you learn to share because you must, where each child is occasionally sure he is being discriminated against, where none can develop any great pride because he must always consider the interests of brothers and sisters. No wonder he could talk about the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son! He probably lived with a brother like that, for there is evidence that Jesus was his mother's favorite son and perhaps James reacted like the elder brother in the story.

Sholem Asch, with his sympathetic understanding of Jewish family life, gives us in *The Nazarene* a beautiful picture of Jesus as the mainstay and counselor of his mother after the father is gone, of the restlessness of Jesus to be away and about his "Father's business," but also his reluctance to leave until he was convinced that his next younger brother could fulfill his place with the mother.

PRACTICAL RELIGION IS RELIGION

Again, Jesus was a man of practical religion because, to him, that was religion. Consider his inaugural address. He resounds the keynote of his message. "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." And then he went out into actual experience to put this into practice. He did not sit in an armchair and wheedle his religion out of a set of books. He went to the wedding at Cana and shared his religion. He accepted invitations to homes like that of Mary and Martha, and there taught religion. He stopped at a well for a drink of water and converted a woman who gave him the water. Jesus entered into life situations and preached the gospel by living it with people.

In the second place, observe how Jesus used the practical in defining and interpreting religion. Look at his parables. What are they about? With what are most of them concerned? With faith? No. With heaven? Hardly. Could it be church attendance? Wrong again. Maybe it's the Bible. No. Thirteen out of his twenty-nine parables are about money and its right use. Jesus talked more about money than he did about heaven; more than he did about hell, about prayer, Scripture reading, church attendance, moral living. Yes, Jesus said more about the dangers of getting, keeping, hoarding and giving than about any other subject. You would think that Jesus would confine himself to love, faith, immortality—spiritual topics. No. Jesus talked about money because he knew what a dangerous possession it could be. Jesus was no abstract idealist. He was a monetary realist.

HOW JESUS ANSWERED QUESTIONS

Jesus used practical terms in answering questions. When he was asked, "Who is my neighbor?" he might have indulged in a neat bit of sophistry; but instead, he said: "A certain man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho fell among thieves . . . " When the Pharisees and lawyers criticized him for eating and drinking, and ridiculed John the Baptist for his asceticism, Jesus might have built up a logical argument on the subject. Instead, he said: "Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation . . . ? They are like unto children sitting in the market place." Read that seventh chapter of Luke. Finish the story and continue to the next story which tells of Jesus being entertained in a wealthy home. A woman of the streets came in and washed his feet. When his rich host became disgruntled, did Jesus lecture him on tolerance? No. Instead, he said: "There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: The one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty . . . " And when he finished the story, Simon caught the point.

When Jesus talked about the Kingdom of Heaven, he did not theorize. He painted it in practical terms. Instead, he said: "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise and five were foolish . . ." He knew what was in man, so he could make his characters live. Charles Lamb in his *Essays of Elia* gives us his impression of the characters Jesus painted.

> When a child, with child-like apprehension I read those Parables—not guessing their involved wisdom—I had more yearnings toward that simple architect who

built his house upon the sand than I entertained for his more cautious neighbor; I grudged at the hard censure pronounced upon the quiet soul that kept his talent; and—prizing their simplicity beyond the more provident, and, to my apprehension, somewhat unfeminine wariness of their competitors—I felt a kindliness that almost amounted to a "tendre" for those five thoughtless virgins.

The characters Jesus lets us see in his parables are not platitudinous puppets—they live. They have the power to choose right and wrong.

JESUS MINGLED WITH MEN

We have been saying that Jesus' religion was practical and dealt with people. He went where folks were. He worked with them and became a part of their lives. Jesus' religion is founded upon practical mingling with men. He knew what was in man—his drives, motives, emotion. But it does not remain there. If that is as high as we go, then Jesus is a mere psychologist. Jesus talked about nature, but if we leave it at that point, then Jesus is no more than a good horticulturist. We have said that Jesus went to men in their environment, but if that is all that we can say about him, then he is only a good sociologist.

But we can say more about Jesus than merely that he was a practical man. Jesus mingled with men in their environment and related their habitat to his religious principles; but always with some high aim in mind. Look at the fifteenth chapter of Luke. There he talks about a lost sheep, a lost coin, a lost son. He is not in the sheep or banking business, nor is he an employee of a Traveler's Aid Society seeking lost children. When he talks about these things, he is propounding the truth which we believe we are fighting for today: that people are important. They are not, as some dictators preach, tools and instruments for some base purpose; they are sacred. When Jesus cured the Gadarene demoniac he was not in the butcher business; he was merely pointing out that man is of more importance than sheep or goats or swine. And when he took that child and set it in the midst of them, he was not giving a demonstration on child psychology, but saying, "This is the kingdom of God."

Jesus was a practical man dealing with practical people and practical affairs, but always with one purpose in mind. He wanted to take people where they were and elevate them to their potential height. He felt he could not do the latter until he had done the former.

HOW JESUS CHANGED MEN

Most of us are eager to follow the practical Jesus. He appeals to us as he talks not about soporific theology but about weddings, nature, journeys; but are we willing to go the next step—to let ourselves be lifted by him to our potential height and to be strengthend by his transforming power? Only after asking that question do we begin to see the purpose of Jesus in setting forth a practical religion.

Look at one man he changed—Peter. For three years he touched the life of that impetuous, uncouth, blustering fisherman. Why—for the practical purpose of making Peter a better fisherman? No—to transform him into a tower of strength who could lead his disciples. The training he gave Peter was not a course in metaphysical theology. He taught him through practical daily experiences, always relating those mundane affairs to God. Here was Peter—raw material upon whom fate placed pressure. Look at him—impulsive, daring, weak, untactful. But because of those three years with Jesus, Peter grew, and gradually the poorer choices were outbalanced by the better decisions. Finally, Peter emerged—a spiritual giant.

If you were to ask Peter, "What difference did he make?" Peter would answer: "He took my fears and gave me courage, he took my weakness and gave me strength, he took my despair and gave me faith, he took my bitterness and gave me love. And now the gates of hell shall not prevail against me—for I am rock."

That's what Jesus did for Peter—and that's what he can do for you.

After Christmas, What?

By Roger Eddy Treat

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen. Luke 2:20.

And the shepherds went back glorifying God and praising him for all that they had heard and seen. Luke 2:20 (Goodspeed).

HERE is a text of texts for the natural and inevitable reaction and "let-down" that comes with the passing of Christmas. Surely in direct proportion to the joy and beauty of Christmas is our everlasting regret that its wondrous hours speed by so quickly.

The discovery that one is old always come unheralded and as a great shock. Suddenly, one day, we awake to the undeniable fact that life, at best, is three-quarters or more gone. All through the years we have been so busy with the tasks confronting us that we have never really looked at the clock or the calendar. Moreover, our strength has all the while been fully equal to our needs. But one day, like a flash of lightning, comes the stark realization that we are no longer young. And so it is with all the great and beautiful experiences and days in this our life: They pass all too soon!

I have no doubt that most of us watch the unmistakable signs of approaching dusk on Christmas night with a feeling akin to pain. How quickly so rich and beautiful an experience as Christmas goes beyond re-

call! If only its tender and exalted miracle and spell might last! No one can enter at all deeply into the meaning of Christmas, expose his mind, heart and will to its wonder-working charm, without having the gray shadows driven back from his sky and a fire of tenderness set going on the hearth of his inner self. He does not need to be told, then, that the spirit of Christmas, made perpetual and regnant over human wills and lives, is God's wish, dream and purpose for himself and for all men. Good will owns and holds him captive for at least a day. It ought to make him conscript to its gentle mastery for the duration of his life. But, pathetically, with the passing of the day goes the passing of the mood and the resolution striving to come to birth in our souls. And as when following some absorbing play we step out of the theater into the old, cold, gray world of hard reality we face the after-Christmas days of our old selves and routine.

THE TRANSFIGURATION EXPERIENCE

We may never know in full what the three disciples, Peter, James and John experienced with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Hints of the meaning of those wondrous moments appear in the account. The Master's face and clothing seemed touched with a light never before seen by them. He was companioned by the greatest men of their nation's history. Moses, Elijah and perhaps others who had made their people great because they had made God real, were there. The disciples did not know what to say and, if they had known, they could not have found adequate words in which to set forth the inexpressible. All that they knew was what all of us have known in moments of great hope and faith and love—that it was good for them to be there! They wished, as do we, to perpetuate the wordless joy of the hour. Practical-minded Peter, ever spokesman for the twelve companions of Christ, came out with the only suggestion we ever come by: "Let us build three huts, one for thee, one for Moses and one for Elijah." He did not know what else to say, nor do we. Suddenly a great cloud overshadowed them and out of the cloud came a voice, which said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him."

You and I have the same experience on the 25th of December, if we enter at all deeply into the Kingdom of Christmas. We see in him whose day we are keeping an unmistakable message from God. His spirit and life are the divine will of God for men, the answer to the mystery of our existence, the reason for living. We are here to become Christlike men and women and to join with him in building the Kingdom of Good Will on earth. None of us who truly kept Christmas could have missed that fact. It was as though God spoke to us out of the silent, beautiful mystery of the day, saying, as to those three disciples on the mountain top: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." God speaks to men in just such moments on just such high days. If we do not hear him then, we shall never hear him at all.

FROM THE MOUNT TO LOWLY SERVICE

And it is interesting and instructive to notice how Jesus answered the most human wish and suggestion of Peter—to perpetuate the wonder of those hours on the mountain top. He led them quietly down the slopes and back to the busy life in service of human need and the spreading of the Kingdom of Good Will among men. Quickly and without question, the Master harnessed the exaltation and resolution induced in their souls by that ecstatic and indescribable moment to the tasks and needs of today's life and tomorrow's world. He brooked no mere selfish enjoyment of the wonder that had possessed them all. In Dean Sperry's fine figure, "no racing of the motor" was permitted. He coupled the emotional power to immediate loads to be lifted and moved.

This was likewise true of the shepherds of the Christmas story. "They went back glorifying God and praising him for all that they had seen and heard." They went back to their familiar and unpromising and often monotonous and lonely tasks. That text speaks volumes to you and me, when we pause to meditate and let it get at our minds. Suppose we had shared what they shared that holy night, would we have had the strength of will to go back to our old days and ways, even under the whip of stern necessity and the call of duty? How commonplace and inconsequential their occupations must have seemed to those shepherds whose eyes had seen the King! The countryside was filled with shepherds upon whose eyes the vision splendid had never fallen, whose ears had never heard angelic choruses. Why not leave to them the task of guiding and protecting sheep, while they drank their fill of the sweetest and most inspiring cup ever pressed to human lips? How could they go back to the old job, prosaic, dangerous, exhausting and drab after all that they had heard and seen?

There is but one answer: there were no *old* days and ways, there was no *old* job, nor were they the same men after Christmas that they were before. The skies were still bright with a holy light. Life had a new meaning and they themselves were changed individuals; for the glory of the Lord had risen upon them, upon their world and its work. The old had been rung out and the utterly new and beautiful had been rung in. Behold all things had become new. They had shared the transforming power of Christ's presence and spirit. Life was shot through with new beauty and meaning from its least to its greatest task, from its first to its last moment. "And the shepherds went back, glorifying God and praising him for all the things they had seen and heard."

'PRAISING' AND 'GLORIFYING'

Therein lies our answer to the ancient question: After Christmas, what? After Christmas, old tasks touched with new light and meaning, and we take them up once more with a song of hope in our hearts and the joy of serving spurring us on! If only we may be as wise as were the shepherds and go back to our work, wherever it may be—in office, store, shop, fac-

tory, school or kitchen—in the same spirit and with the same purpose, the wonder of Christmas need not fade but rather go with us through the year, and the years.

DISCHARGING OUR DEBTS

Two words in our text still need to be understood. "Glorifying" and "praising" are not to be taken as synonymous. The mood of praise is easily induced by Christmas. The lights and carols, the instinctive sentiments of the season readily bring us under their welcome spell. There is nothing lovelier given among men than they. All our Christmas rituals are attempts to express the fact that the life that then began was the free gift of an utterly gracious, loving and merciful God. He is dead of soul indeed who does not find himself singing his very heart out in praise before the glory and sheer goodness of the fact and the Day. Ah, but glorifying God is something so much more than voicing our gratitude. My dictionary says that to glorify is to advance the glory of God by faithful action. It is to transform life into something glorious —to make it sublime. It is causing all that is within us, and within our power, to bless his holy name. We praise God with our hearts and lips; we glorify him, if we glorify him at all, with our lives from moment to moment, day to day, Christmas to Christmas. The shepherds, therefore, went back to their sheep on Judean hillsides not only thanking God for his wonderful goodness to them and to all men in making Christmas and Jesus Christ a fact. They went back also to transform their lives into something glorious.

Let someone do to and for you a gracious and generous thing. I care not what that deed or gift may be. It may be no more than helping to lift a load which has proved oppressively heavy—sharing loneliness and grief, standing by in moments of suffering, helping to meet a situation before which you find yourself helpless. It is easy in such a moment to say, thank you. But each of us knows that expressing gratitude is only half, if even half, of what the situation demands by way of response. The rest involves a high use of what has been given.

We think perhaps, especially as we grow older and have families of our own, of all that our parents did for us. We cannot seriously reflect upon that fact without being grateful. But if mere thankfulness exhausts our reaction to our awareness of their goodness, we have left the larger part undone. Only as we make a sustained and consistent attempt to buy up and fulfill their hopes and dreams by way of worthy and appropriate living do we come near discharging the debt. Therein we touch a fine principle close to the heart of all life and something central to all religion at its best. To say thank you, to praise, is easy and instinctive; to glorify, to live worthily in response to the given goodness in the world, is difficult but indispensable.

AFTER CHRISTMAS, WHAT?

The shepherds did not exhaust their response to the wonder of Christmas in praise; they went back to their tasks to use their years in glorifying God by faithful lives. They undertook to show forth, in all

A Pastoral Prayer

12-19-43

By M. J. Gordanier

O WONDERFUL COUNSELOR, Mighty God, Everlasting Father: we praise Thee this day for the revelation of Thyself in Jesus Christ our Lord. He alone could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In him we see Thee living in perfect goodness and holy love. In him we see Thee weeping over the doomed cities of our world. In him we see Thee suffering for the world's redemption. In him we see Thee living eternally and seeking out the lost.

We have sinned. We have not sought Thy ways, O Wonderful Counselor. Instead of seeking counsel with Thee we have gone our own ways to find pleasure and self-satisfaction, to gather comforts and luxuries, unmindful of other children of Thine so often hurt or impoverished by our selfishness. We have turned from Thee as the Mighty God and have trusted rather in mighty navies, and bombing planes, and tanks. Having put our trust in these, we now must live under the conditions our trust has brought forth. We have turned from Thee, our Everlasting Father, to follow the ways of materialism; we have exalted human powers and achievements, and have bowed down to them.

Our Father, we are beginning to see the folly of our ways. We confess our sins and plead that we are no more worthy to be called Thy children. If only we might again live in Thy household we would gladly be mere hired servants. But we know that because Thou art our Father, Thou wilt not take away our freedom and make us bond-servants. Thou canst welcome us into Thy presence only as sons and daughters. Therefore, O Father, we trust in Thy love, and throw ourselves upon Thy mercy. Henceforth we would let Thee be our Counselor. We would take Thee as our God above every other power. We want to know Thee and love Thee and live with Thee as our Eternal Father.

In this prayer, O God, we would lift Thy whole world unto Thee, that we and all Thy sinning children may be purged and cleansed for fellowship with Thee and for brotherhood and peace on earth, through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

their days, the things which they had seen and heard. Our world is waiting wistfully for men and women whom Christ and Christmas have touched to do the same things. If we do not make that attempt, we whom Christmas has touched to fresh insights and new insights and warmth, who will?

After Christmas, what? After Christmas for us, as for him who was cradled in a manger, growing in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. That is the only worthy response to a gift so good and so great. We shall not be content until the earth gives back the angels' song. To that high end we shall give our hearts, minds and strength in direct proportion to our genuine keeping of Christmas. And that is the gift of gifts for which the world waits so wistfully.

Trimming the Tree

A Sermon for Children by Carl S. Weist

ON CHRISTMAS EVE, the happiest time of all the year, you will be trimming your tree. First your dad nails on the standard; then with great shouting and laughter on the part of the entire family, he proudly stands the tree up in the corner by the fireplace. After that, boxes which you haven't seen since last Christmas are brought up from the cellar or down from the attic. You brush off the dust, then begin poking around looking for your favorite Santa Claus. What fun! To string the lights, wind the tinsel, then hook on the colored balls, getting too many in one place, breaking some, and strewing mother's clean floor with strings, glass, icicles and cotton snow; but what's the difference? It is Christmas Eve, the season to be merry.

Finally everything is on the tree: the fluttering angel with real hair and a halo of gold, the star with its shining light at the very tip, and the twinkling red, green and blue balls, making it the loveliest tree in all the world. Of course it is the loveliest, for it is yours. There is not another just like it anywhere.

Now all is ready for the gifts. Over there in the corner are some interesting looking packages which in your excitement you probably haven't noticed. Let's see what they are.

NO ROOM FOR SELFISHNESS

Here is a beautiful package marked "OTHERS." We will hang it just under the angel, for that is what Christmas means—thinking of others.

Some years ago when General Booth of the Salvation Army was asked at Christmas time to cable one word to his workers around the world, what do you think he sent? "Others." What a wonderful word it is, one of the greatest you will ever have in your life; for when you hang this package on your Christmas tree, you will begin to forget yourself and be like Christ.

There is no room on a Christmas tree for selfishness. One morning, long before the family was up, a father heard his little girl singing:

> Happy birthday to me,
> Happy birthday to me,
> Happy birthday, dear Susan,
> Happy birthday to me.

That's the way it is with too many boys and girls; it is "Merry Christmas to me." Their thought is mostly about what they are going to receive. But that is to miss entirely the meaning of Christmas; for Christ was born on Christmas Day, as a gift to everyone, and when we really receive the Christ Child, we cannot be selfish but will be anxious and eager to give to others.

LOVE FOR OUR ENEMIES

Let's take this package next. How is it marked? "LOVE." It is wrapped beautifully with a paper of "understanding," and tied with a cord of "appreciation." What do you suppose that means? I think it means that love understands and appreciates. Whom? Just now, maybe Japanese boys and girls. If with love in your heart you try to understand and appreciate them, there can be no hate. Is that not what Christ would have us do, especially at Christmas—love our enemies?

This summer I heard a boy of eight years say: "I wish I were older so that I could take a crack at the Japs." I found that he seemed to hate them all. They were all alike to him, all snakes, all savages. But you and I know that Japanese, Germans, Italians are not all alike. They are different, as different as you and I. Some are good, some are bad, but all are children of God; and when we hate them, we are not being like Christ who came on Christmas Day to show us the love of God. So, let's fasten this package of love high up and keep it high in our lives forever.

THE SONG OF THE ANGELS

One more package, the loveliest of all. It is marked "PEACE," and tied with a cord of good will. We will give it a very prominent place, for unless boys and girls have peace and good will in their own hearts, how will peace ever come to this confused and war-weary world?

Now that your tree is complete with these packages, I am sure there will be joy in your hearts. You will echo the song of the angels, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will to men," and will shout in your happiness, "Merry Christmas to all the world!"

The Christian Century Pulpit—Index, 1943

Sermons

Beaven, Robert H.: "The Word and the World" (October)
Bell, Bernard Iddings: "Can America Be Free?" (June)
Brewing, Willard: "Things to Come Are Yours" (February)
Brookshire, Henry T.: "Priorities for a Kingdom Program" (July)
Buckham, John Wright: "The Call to Courage" (May)
Buschman, Leonard V.: "Overcoming with Kindness" (November)
Carpenter, J. Henry: "The Hardest Word in the Bible" (October)
Chalmers, Allan Knight: "On the Edge of New Life" (March)
Chicoine, Victor B.: "Dealers in Purple" (May)
Conn, Howard J.: "The Disturbing Jesus" (December)
Cornett, A. D.: "Is This War a Judgment of God?" (August)
Corson, Lynn Hough: "The Great Deliverance" (November)
DeGroot, A. T.: "The One New Thing in Christianity" (December)
Ditzen, Lowell R.: "The Perils to Worthy Purposes" (January)
Dodd, M. E.: "The Spirit-Filled Life" (April)
Fairbairn, R. Edis: "Four Men Meet Their Crisis" (February)
Fey, Harold E.: "This Alone Is Victory" (May)
Finegan, Jack: "There Shall Be a Highway" (January)
Fuller, Ellis A.: "It Is Time to Seek Jehovah" (May)
Garrison, Winfred Ernest: "New Men for the New Day" (September)
Haeussler, Armin: "Behind the Display Window" (August)
Hazelton, Roger: "Prayer in Wartime" (March)
Heimsath, Charles H.: "The Magnificat" (December)
Hine, James R.: "Invitation to Adventure" (June)
Homrighausen, E. G.: "Life's Perennial Emergency" (October)
Hudnut, Herbert B.: "Men of Nazareth" (March)
Hudson, Winthrop S.: "It is Belief that Matters" (August)
Hutchison, Stuart Nye: "Can God Be Ignored?" (October)
Johnson, Talmage C.: "Thank God for America!" (November)
Jordan, G. Ray: "Immortality in a Day of Doubt" (April)
Jordan, Orvis F.: "The Family in Wartime" (May)
Kenaston, Rolla S.: "Fox-hole Religion" (October)
Kennedy, Gerald: "Five Minutes Longer" (May)
Kilpatrick, G. G. D.: "Strengthening Words" (February)
Littlefair, Duncan E.: "Crossing the Road" (January)
Lowell, C. Stanley: "High Conquest" (January)
Luccock, Halford E.: "Restorers or Creators?" (June)
Luccock, Robert E.: "An Extension of Main Street" (January)
Luchs, Fred E.: "The Practicality of Jesus" (December)
Lunger, Harold L.: "Lincoln as Peacemaker" (November)
MacLennan, David A.: "I Saw Two Calvaries" (February)
Marshall, Peter: "Were You There?" (March); "Life's Rosaries" (November)
Maurer, Oscar Edward: "Majoring in Minorities" (July)
McKeehan, Hobart D.: "The Fidelity of God" (September)
Meckel, Aaron N.: "The Handwriting on the Wall" (September)
Newton, Joseph Fort: "The Prophetic Day" (December)
Nooe, Roger T.: "The Will and the Way of God" (April)
Odom, Warren G.: "What Happens When We Pray?" (September)
Palmer, Everett W.: "The Law of Liberty" (July)
Reeves, Joseph W.: "America Is Not God" (October)
Schearrer, R. Paul: "The Gods of Our Enemies" (November)
Scherer, Paul: "The Day of the Lord Is Darkness" (March)
Schlicher, Donald W.: "Our 'Amens'" (January)
Schloerb, Rolland W.: "An Uneasy Conscience About Killing" (September)
Semple, James: "The Church and the Irreligious" (February)
Shirkey, Albert P.: "The Glory of the Cross" (April)
Sisco, Gordon A.: "Repentance in a Modern Setting" (February)
Smith, Horace G.: "Maintaining the Great Tradition" (July)
Smith, Neil G.: "The Making of Man" (July)
Stephens, John U.: "Rebuilding Life" (August)
Swan, Alfred W.: "Watch, America!" (June)
Thomas II, Lavens: "On Borrowing Trouble" (August)
Thompson, W. Taliaferro: "He Is Alive!" (April)
Tigner, Hugh Stevenson: "Except Your Righteousness Exceeds" (January)
Treat, Roger Eddy: "After Christmas, What?" (December)
Wagner, O. Walter: "What Labor Expects of the Churches" (September)
White, Lynn Townsend: "We, Too, Want a World!" (June)
Whitehead, Robert C.: "America the Beautiful" (July)
Wingfield, Marshall: "Race Relations in America" (April)
Wirt, Williston: "Where Is the Promise of His Coming?" (August)
Wishart, Charles F.: "Passing the Baton" (June)

Pastoral Prayers

Ames, Edward S. (September)
Cedarleaf, Wallace (January)
Fey, Harold E. (March)
Gordanier, M. J. (December)
Hazelton, Roger (November)
Hudson, Winthrop S. (June)
Kagawa, Toyohiko (April)
Perkins, James C. (August)
Rayner, DeCourcy H. (February)
Tittle, Ernest F. (May)
Wimberly, Ware W. (October)

Preacher Problems

Albright, Raymond W.: "Toward an Understanding of Lent, 1943" (March)
Burr, Hugh Chamberlin: "What Will Happen in the Churches?" (January)
Casteel, John L.: "The Voice of the Minister" (June)
Crane, Henry H.: "Preaching Unpopular Truth" (May)
Fortson, John L.: "Pastoral Counseling in Wartime" (February)
Harkness, Georgia: "The Art of Public Prayer" (September)
Hiltner, John: "A Christmas Choral Speaking Choir" (December)
Hiltner, Seward: "Pastoral Counseling in Wartime" (February)
Holman, Charles T.: "The Church: 1943 Model" (April)
Kerr, Jr., Hugh Thomson: "Semantics and Sermonics" (November)
Oxley, Chester J.: "The Miracle of Words" (August)
Straton, Hillyer H.: "And Ye Visited Me" (October)
Wallace, Jerry: "Fishing and Preaching" (July)

Sermons for Young People and Children

Clausen, Bernard C.: "Who Started This?" (October)
Elmer, Franklin D.: "The Great Blue Heron—Our Brother" (August)
Foster, Virgil E.: "A Children's Sermon for Mother's Day" (May); "Keep Your Lenses Clean" (November)
Lichau, W. J.: "Be Like a Tree" (July)
Potts, Florence W.: "Playing Peace" (February)
Rayner, DeCourcy H.: "Easter Kites" (April)
Rosenberger, Harleigh M.: "Let's 'Scrap' Our Selfish Habits" (January)
Steininger, William R.: "The Ninety and Nine—Plus One" (March)
Twiddy, William: "Lead Pencils" (September)
Weist, Carl S.: "Trimming the Tree" (December)
Weist, Carl S.: "Victory in Gardens" (June)

Book of the Month

Bowie, Walter Russell: "Which Way Ahead?" (April)
Bro, Margueritte H.: "Every Day a Prayer" (December)
Brown, William Adams: "The New Order in the Church" (June)
Dawson, Christopher: "The Judgment of the Nations" (October)
Flewelling, Ralph Tyler: "The Survival of Western Culture" (July)
Fosdick, Harry Emerson: "On Being a Real Person" (May)
Howard, Hans Paxton: "America's Role in Asia" (September)
Hutchinson, Paul: "From Victory to Peace" (November)
Lee, Umphrey: "The Historic Church and Modern Pacifism" (February)
Niebuhr, Reinhold: "The Nature and Destiny of Man," Volume II (March)
Smith, Roy L.: "Know Your Bible Series" (August)
Stafford, Thomas R.: "Christian Symbolism in the Evangelical Churches" (January)

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THE PULPIT

407 South Dearborn Street
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A Christmas Choral Speaking Choir

By John Hiltner

MANY A PASTOR and many a program committee are still looking for material to be used during the Christmas season—something a little different from the usual fare. Have you tried choral speaking, a speaking choir? If not, give it a trial this year.

Choral speaking has been defined as the oral interpretation of poetry or prose by many voices speaking as one (Agnes Curren Hamm, *Selections For Choral Speaking,* p. 8). By this term we do not refer to the old-time tortured "speaking together" which usually sounded like Tin Pan Alley. It means an orchestration of voices, a process of blending human voices in such a way that they harmonize. Choral speaking is musical speaking.

Naturally, perfect choral speaking requires as much time and effort as a regular church choir, but it is surprising how readily the proper voice material responds to the idea. It is understood that the parts must be memorized.

The following material was used successfully as part of a candlelight service at Wartburg College where the writer is teaching. It will be repeated this year. The Scripture passages were selected and arranged under a threefold theme. In order to avoid monotony in reading, three "acts" were provided. (A curtain comes in handy.) The intermissions were marked with appropriate music. Various light effects were used and proved helpful. Where floodlights are not available, a few large light bulbs of various colors will do.

A few technical terms used in this connection might need a little explanation. "Voice" stands for an individual who speaks certain lines. We sometimes call it "solo." The terms "light" and "dark" are used to describe the contrasting voices. Dark voices are deep, full voices. Fewer persons are needed for this group, because there is more volume in the individual voice. Light voices are higher in pitch. When both men and women are used for choral speaking, the men would naturally constitute the "dark" side, and the women the "light" group. When the choir consists of men only, the light voices are what we usually call tenor voices; the dark ones are the bass voices. When only women are reading, dark applies to alto voices and light to soprano voices.

Our complete program is given herewith. It can be adjusted to any local condition.

Christmas Choral Service

PRELUDE

Leader: The Lord is in his holy temple:

Audience: Let all the earth keep silence before him. (Hab. 2:20)

Leader: From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles:

Audience: And in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts. (Mal. 1:11)

Leader: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight:

Audience: O Lord, my strength and my redeemer. (Ps. 19:14)

Scripture Reading: Psalm 96.

Hymn: O Come all Ye Faithful: Audience.
(All lights out—soft music in the background)

CHORAL SPEAKING CHOIR—PART ONE

The Sure Word of Prophecy

Voice 1: Watchman, what of the night?
(Light pause—then coming as from a distance)

Voice 2: Watchman, what of the night? (Isa. 21:11)
(Pause)

Light: O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion!
(Pause)

Dark: When the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad. (Ps. 14:7)

Voice 1 (Dim blue light): Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute his judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is his name whereby he shall be called: *THE LORD—OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.* (Jer. 23:5, 6)

Voice 2: Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. . . . The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness:

Voice 3 (Off stage—from a distance, coming closer and closer): Prepare ye the way of the Lord! Make straight in the desert a highway for our God! Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. (Isa. 40:1-5)

All: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion: *THY GOD REIGNETH!* (Isa. 52:7)

Dark (Strong blue light focused on the choir): Arise! Shine! for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people. But the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. (Isa. 60:1-3)

All: Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in.

Light: Who is this king of glory?

All: The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in.

Light: Who is this king of glory?

All: The Lord of hosts, *HE* is the king of glory! (Ps. 24:7-10)

(Pause)

Dark (In hushed tone): And thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. (Micah 5:2)

Light (Strong white light added to blue): The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. (Isa. 9:2)

All: For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder. And his name shall be called *WONDERFUL—COUNSELOR—THE MIGHTY GOD—THE EVERLASTING FATHER—THE PRINCE OF PEACE.* (Isa. 9:6)

(White light out—full blue light still on)

Voice 1: And the Spirit of the Lord shall be upon him: The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. (Isa. 11:2)

Voice 2: Behold, my servant, whom I uphold! Mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth! I have put my spirit upon him. He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench. He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. (Isa. 42:1-3)

Voice 1: Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his Temple, even the messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in. Behold—he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. (Mal. 3:1)

(Curtain)

Candelighting—soft music

CHORAL SPEAKING CHOIR—PART TWO

THE DAY OF SALVATION

All (White light—subdued): Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us; to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. (Luke 1:68-79)

Voice 1: And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, everyone to his own city.

Voice 2: And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and lineage of David) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the inn.

Voice 1: And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them.

(Every available light on)

and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them:

(A woman's voice, or a light male voice)

Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Voice 1: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

(Either a group of women, or the entire choir)

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN. (Luke 2:1-14) *(Curtain)*

Hymn: Joy to the World: Audience.

CHORAL SPEAKING CHOIR—PART THREE

THE VOICE OF THE CHURCH

All (Red light): When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (Gal. 4:4-5)

Light: And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

Dark: For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

Light: This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. (1 Tim. 1:15)

Dark: In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. (1 John 4:9)

All: Herein is love: Not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:10)

If God be for us, who can be against us—He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (Rom. 8:32)

Voice 1: I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. (Rom. 8:38-39)

(Pause)

Voice 2: Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel. (Luke 2:29-32)

All (Every available light on again): Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Our Father, who art in heaven:

Hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!

Give us this day our daily bread! And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us! And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil! For Thine is the KINGDOM, and the POWER, and the GLORY, forever and ever! Amen.

Hymn: Hark, the Herald Angels Sing: Audience.

WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE

DURING the First World War Rev. JOSEPH FORT NEWTON was minister of the City Temple, London, Eng., and since 1919 he has ministered at the Church of the Divine Paternity, New York, and in Philadelphia at the Memorial Church of St. Paul, St. James Church, and the Church of St. Luke and the Epiphany. He has written many books; the most recent one is entitled, *Live, Love and Learn.*

Having been awarded his M.A. degree by the University of Texas, Rev. CHARLES H. HEIMSATH taught in that school for four years. Later he received his B.D. at Yale. Following a pastorate at First Baptist Church, Bridgeport, Conn., he went to First Church, Evanston, Ill., where he now ministers.

Rev. HOWARD J. CONN *has been pastor of First* Congregational Church, Great Barrington, Mass., since 1941. He received his education at Leland Stanford, Harvard and Yale Divinity School.

During the past six years Rev. FRED E. LUCHS has ministered at the Community Presbyterian Church, Athens, O., seat of the Ohio University. He has served as exchange preacher in British churches, also in Paris and Berlin.

Dr. A. T. DEGROOT *has been professor of the* history of religions at Drake University since 1941. He was professor of Old Testament languages and literature at Butler University, 1929-33, and has held pastorates in Spencer, Ind., and Kalamazoo, Mich.

Receiving his academic degree at Harvard, Rev. ROGER EDDY TREAT later studied at Andover Seminary, where he received his S.T.B. degree. He held two pastorates in Connecticut and since 1926 has ministered at Bushnell Congregational Church, Detroit, Mich.

Rev. M. J. GORDANIER *is minister of the Methodist* Church, Markesan, Wis.

Rev. CARL S. WEIST *is minister of the Community* Church in Mt. Vernon, N. Y.

Dr. JOHN HILTNER *heads the department of religion* and philosophy at Wartburg College, Waverly, Ia. Dr. Hiltner states that he would be glad to hear from any ministers who make use this year of the Christmas service contributed by him to this issue.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

H. L. RUBENDALL, First Presbyterian, Albany, N. Y. "Arise, Shine." Isa. 60:1—"Arise, shine." Matt. 5:14—"Ye are the light of the world."

HAROLD B. WALKER, First Presbyterian, Oklahoma City, Okla. "The Human Face of God." 2 Cor. 5:19—"God was in Christ . . . "

JAMES C. PERKINS, Congregational, Groveland, Mass. "The Simplicity of Christianity." 2 Cor. 11:3—"But I have a fear that in some way . . . your hearts may be turned from their simple and holy love for Christ." (N. T. in Basic English)

ERNEST B. MOTLEY, First Christian, Russellville, Ky. "Giving God the Priority." Matt. 6:33—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

A. E. COWLEY, Walnut Hills Baptist, Cincinnati, O. "The Betrayed Generation." Matt. 10:21—"The father will betray the child." (Weymouth)

LESTER E. KEMPER, Kennedy Hts. Presbyterian, Cincinnati, O. "The Faith of a Godly Pioneer." Acts 11:8—"He went out, not knowing whither he went."

WILLIAM RICHARDS, Congregational, Atkinson, Ill. "Our First and Last Resort." Phil. 2:13—"For it is God himself whose power creates within you both the desire and the power to execute his gracious will." (Weymouth)

ROY A. BURKHART, First Community Church, Columbus, O. "What Shall America Do to be Saved?" Luke 3:4-6—"Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight; and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

W. T. BRADY, United Church, Miami, Man., Can. "Eyes Forward!" Luke 16:8—"The children of this world look further ahead in dealing with this generation than the children of light." (Moffatt)

R. A. DEMPSEY, First Presbyterian, Ladd, Ill. "Void If Detached." John 15:5—" I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for apart from me ye can do nothing."

CARL R. PRITCHETT, Davidson College Presbyterian, Davidson, N. C. "The Sin of Doing Nothing." James 4:17—"To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

G. CURTIS JONES, Christian, Tazewell, Va. "Old Strategy for a New Year." Phil. 4:6, 7—"Never be anxious, but always make your requests known to God in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving; so shall God's peace, that surpasses all our dreams, keep guard over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Moffatt)

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

.....

Title of sermon

.....

Text used (write out the text)

.....

Name of minister

.....

Name of church

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Address

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

GRAVE doubts have haunted the Anglo-American allies as to the intentions of Russia. The agreement signed in Moscow has somewhat allayed these doubts. The three substantive matters agreed upon were (1) the necessity of an ultimate inclusive postwar organization to prevent aggression, (2) consultation among the victors in the interim between the armistice and the creation of the world organization, and (3) no separate peace. Whether the grounds for skepticism have been genuinely removed or not, time alone will tell. It is possible for us to attach too great importance to an international document prepared and signed in the midst of a war. Nations always find ways of evading their pledges when the political realities change. Mr. Hull has considerably revived the disquiet which the agreement at first allayed, by his frank statement that the matter of territorial boundaries was not included in the conference, and that the power whose army gets to Germany first will do the policing of that defeated country. I believe, and have repeatedly said on this page, that the Western allies, instead of trying to beat the Russians to Berlin should do all in their power to give this "honor" and its responsibility to Stalin. This seems to me to be not only the most realistic outcome of the European war, but its most promising outcome. Instead of deploring it, as the British may do, Americans should welcome it as offering more hope of peace than for the Anglo-Americans to be loaded with such a responsibility.

The Moscow Declaration

The Book of the Month

EVERY DAY A PRAYER, *by Margueritte Harmon Bro. Willett, Clark & Company, $1.50.*

ONE of the good signs in the church is the deepening interest in the devotional life. Everyone of us needs guidance in our private meditations and prayers. Life is so rich with meaning that our solitary insights can grasp only a few of its meanings. We need fellowship in our prayers—the fellowship of those who have found God in many ways and have made their insights articulate in noble words. A book of devotion provides us with the fellowship of hearts that have sought the Lord and been found of him. Mrs. Bro's book is one of the most satisfying manuals of devotion which has appeared. In 365 themes interpreted by the author and enriched with selections of the noblest spiritual utterances of the great souls who have made their life's pilgrimage in the companionship of Christ —poets and saints and sages whose wisdom is the priceless possession of the ages—Mrs. Bro has provided us a new pattern for our devotion. Her book is different. Its tone and spirit are unlike any other that I have read. It takes our common life and lifts it up to God. It is totally devoid of sentimentalism—though redolent of lofty sentiment. One senses the absence of the "holy tone," even in the prayers. There is an occasional touch of humor in the treatment of a theme, for the themes reflect our everyday experiences. The vital mind of the author has given us a manual of—shall I say?—*vivacious* devotion. It brings comfort and assurance, but it also inspires hope and courage for a life of action. You can open this book wherever you happen to be—even on the busy street—and find yourself in God's presence.

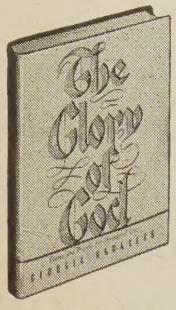
A Thought for the Month

WHEN Paul rebuked the members of the church at Corinth for their budding sectarianism he laid down a principle which none of us should ever forget. The Corinthians were in danger of dividing into three parties or sects. Three great leaders—Cephas (Peter), Apollos and Paul himself—were set up as rivals, and their followers had begun to group themselves around their favorite with partisan attachment. Paul was determined that this incipient sectarianism should be nipped in the bud. He declared that it was born of a spirit that was alien to Christianity. When you cry: "I am of Paul, I of Apollos and I of Cephas, you are carnal," he said; you are behaving as the world behaves, not as Christians should behave. Instead of dividing over these leaders, you should claim them all as God's gifts to you. "Paul, Apollos and Cephas—all are yours, and you belong only to Christ." Our modern sectarianism is the extension on a grand scale of that incipient sectarianism which Paul rebuked. We have grown so accustomed to it that we do not feel its sin and scandal. Yet this sectarian order has cheated us out of a large part of our Christian heritage; we have been denied access to something that belongs to us, something precious and vital to our full Christian experience. I belong to a particular denomination. By virtue of that fact the treasures and values held by other denominations are shut away from me. As a Christian, I should have access to the whole ecumenical fellowship of Christian faith and experience. But I cannot share in the Presbyterian fellowship or the Methodist or Episcopal fellowship, nor can the members of these denominations share in my Disciples fellowship, because we are all conditioned by our denominational limitations. Paul was pleading that the Corinthian Christians should keep their fellowship on the ecumenical plane—"all are yours"! Here is a little test which I sometimes apply to myself: Would I be willing to see all the other denominations fade away, carrying their particular treasures with them, and leaving only my own denomination as the sole representative of Christianity in the world? The thought is intolerable! Try this test on yourself, whatever your denomination may be. I predict that it will take the sectarian spirit right out of you!

Cheated of Our Full Christian Heritage

Charles Clayton Morrison

Books to Own and Give



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